

LAMBDA COMMUNITY CENTER

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Dear Friends,

The City of Fort Collins, CO, population 110,000 will be the setting for the next battle in liberty and justice for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons. On November 3, 1998 the citizens of Fort Collins will decide whether to add sexual orientation to the Human Rights Ordinance. This will be the first time an issue of sexual orientation is put before voters in Colorado since Amendment Two. This issue is believed to be a test for the right wing Christian organizations in Colorado and around the country. If it does not pass, it is likely that this is their framework for another version of Amendment Two.

In March 1998 the Fort Collins City Council unanimously passed Ordinance 22 prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation in the areas of public accommodation, housing and employment. Ordinance 21 replaces the existing Human Rights Ordinance, which is 25 years old, was also passed unanimously by City Council. Ordinance 21 brings the existing ordinance in compliance with State and Federal discrimination laws.

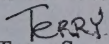
The Lambda Community Center will be engaging in the process to educate the voters of Fort Collins on the main issue of Ordinances 21 and 22, sexual orientation. With a campaign plan in place the Lambda Community Center will be placing media advertisement such as TV, radio and print, performing speaking engagements, developing fact sheets, voter registrations, working with other organizations to collaborate on passing Ordinances 21 and 22 and maintaining the organization.

In order to accomplish the goal of passing 21 & 22, the Lambda Community Center needs to raise \$25,000 minimum. We need your help, maybe you can perform a benefit concert, give a portion of sales, pass the hat, make a personal contribution, hold a house party, sell raffle tickets, donate items for an auction and very important, we need you to speak out and in favor of Ordinances 21 & 22. Please do what you can; our liberty and justice are at stake not only in Fort Collins, but also across Colorado and this nation. This will not stop in Fort Collins if the religious right wins on November 3.

All donations are tax-deductible as they will be used in an educational manner. Please mark you gift Human Rights.

The GLBT community of Fort Collins thanks you for your time. Let us ALL win on November 3 and have 'Liberty and Justice for ALL, no exceptions.'

With Pride,


Terry Summers
Executive Director

LIBERTY & JUSTICE FOR ALL, NO EXCEPTIONS!

Human Rights

The United States was founded on the ideal of human rights and equality for all people. The **Declaration of Independence** states:

"WE hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness"

These simple, eloquently stated rights must be clearly defined in our laws, to translate the ideal into real protection. The **U.S. Constitution**, including the **Bill of Rights** and later amendments, protects private citizens from violation of our rights by the state. Various **federal, state, and local statutes** protect our rights from violation by other citizens.

Civil rights or anti-discrimination laws protect equal access to job opportunities, housing, and public accommodations. They prohibit private discrimination on bases irrelevant to actual qualifications, such as race, religion, age, or disability. Fort Collins passed a local Human Rights Ordinance in the 1970s.

As our country has grown, we have learned that our laws don't always protect the rights of all people. Americans have responded to injustice, and have passed laws to end slavery, to permit women to vote, and to protect civil rights. None of these changes has come without struggle; opponents have claimed these laws were unnecessary, or violated their rights. Yet we have remembered the ideals of our heritage, and acted to realize them.

Ordinance #21

Ordinance #21 replaces the existing Human Rights Code. Your vote is a choice between the current code and the updated version.

What does it change?

- Increases emphasis on conciliation
- Replaces criminal remedies with civil ones
- Age and disability protection made consistent with federal law
- Prohibits discrimination against families, and people on public assistance
- Prohibits harassment in employment
- Exempts small employers and people renting space in their own homes
- Maintains exemptions for religious organizations and Bona Fide Occupational Qualification (BFOQ)
- Clarifies that City Government must comply

Why are these changes needed?

- To reduce discrimination against families and individuals struggling economically
- To keep the emphasis away from blame and on solutions through conciliation
- To address concerns of small business owners about false complaints
- The largest number of inquiries to the Human Rights Office deal with sexual harassment, although it is not mentioned in the current code
- Driven by input from citizen task force

The full text of both ordinances and the existing Human Rights Code is available from the City Clerk's office and on the internet at www.ci.fort-collins.co.us/new.htm

Ordinance #22

Ordinance #22 adds sexual orientation as a basis of discrimination.

What does it change?

- The ordinance does only one thing -- it prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Why is this change needed?

- It is legal to deny someone a job, housing, or public accommodation solely because of sexual orientation
- Citizens face this discrimination in Fort Collins, and have no legal recourse
- Most gay and lesbian citizens must conceal their sexual orientation to protect their jobs and housing

What doesn't this ordinance do?

- It does not endorse any lifestyle
- It does not require, or even permit, giving preference or special treatment to a person *because of* sexual orientation
- It does not limit individual speech or activity
- It does not protect any illegal behavior
- It does not apply to churches or religious non-profit organizations
- It does not apply to choice of roommates
- It does not restrict anyone's religious beliefs or practices